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09/666,859	09/21/2000	Masahiko Murakami	1405.1026/JDH	5944

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EXAMINER	
LEE, PHILIP C	

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2154	3

DATE MAILED: 12/31/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/666,859	MURAKAMI ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Philip C Lee	2154	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *21 September 2000*.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-13* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1-13* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

12)☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☒ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

13)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

14)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1-13 are presented for examination.

2. It is noted that although the present application does contain line numbers in the specification and claims, the line numbers in the claims do not correspond to the preferred format. The preferred format is to number each line of every claim, with each claim beginning with line 1. For ease of reference by both the Examiner and Applicant all future correspondence should include the recommended line numbering.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC 112

3. Claims 1-6 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

a. The following terms lack proper antecedent basis:

i. said keyword categories – claims 1-6 and 12.

b. Claim language in the following claims is not clearly understood:

i. As per claim 2, lines 12-15, it is unclear if the virtual space identifier is written into which at least one of said keywords were sent or written into said virtual space table.

ii. As per claim 12, lines 14-17, it is unclear if the virtual space identifier is written into which at least one of said keywords were sent or written into said virtual space table.

iii. As per claim 13, lines 14-17, it is unclear if the virtual space identifier is written into which at least one of said keywords were sent or written into said virtual space table.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

> A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –
>
> (e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

5. The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) and the Intellectual Property and High Technology Technical Amendments Act of 2002 do not apply when the reference is a U.S. patent resulting directly or indirectly from an international application filed before November 29, 2000. Therefore, the prior art date of the

reference is determined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

6. Claims 1-2, 4 and 12-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Gruen et al, U.S. Patent 6,393,460 (hereinafter Gruen).

7. As per claim 1, Gruen taught the invention substantially as claimed in a chat system structured to include chat devices connected to a network and which share virtual chat spaces configured on said network and which can send and receive messages among themselves (col. 1, lines 15-30), comprising:

associating and preparing specific keywords with specific categories (col. 7, lines 1-7);

specifying said keyword categories wherein at lease one of said keywords are included in messages sent or received in a virtual space (col. 7, lines 14-19);

associating and storing said keywords and said keyword categories with virtual space identifiers of said virtual spaces in which messages are sent or received (col. 3, lines 6-11; col. 7, lines 47-50);

calculating characteristics of said virtual spaces based on said keyword categories associated with the virtual spaces (col. 5, lines 24-col. 6, lines 16); and

reporting said virtual space characteristics to users (col. 3, lines 16-20; col. 7, lines 47-51).

8. As per claims 2 and 12-13, Gruen taught the invention substantially as claimed in a chat system structured to include chat devices connected to a network and which share virtual chat spaces configured on said network and which can send and receive messages among themselves (col. 1, lines 15-30), comprising:

a category table for associating and storing specific keywords with specific categories (col. 3, lines 6-11; col. 6, lines 50-67; col. 7, lines 1-7);

a virtual space table for associating and storing virtual space identifiers, said keywords sent into said virtual spaces, and said keyword categories (col. 3, lines 6-11; col. 7, lines 47-50);

a control means for reading said keyword categories from said category table and for writing said virtual space identifiers of said virtual spaces into which at least one of said keywords were sent, said keywords, and said keyword categories in said virtual space table wherein a message sent into virtual space is acquired from said chat system and said message includes at least one of said keywords (col. 6, lines 33-67; col. 7, lines 45-65);

a decision means for calculating characteristics of said virtual space based on said keyword categories associated with the virtual spaces (col. 5, lines 24-col. 6, lines 16); and

an output means for outputting said characteristics of said virtual spaces (col. 3, lines 16-20; col. 7, lines 47-51).

9. As per claim 4, Gruen taught the invention as claimed in claim 2 above. Gruen further taught wherein

said communication support system is additionally provided with a message volume storage means for storing message volume determined form a volume of messages sent form chat devices for each virtual space (col. 5, lines 24-col. 6, lines 16); and

said decision means calculates said virtual space characteristics based on said keyword categories sent by chat devices in accordance with said message volume of chat devices in said virtual spaces (col. 5, lines 24-col. 6, lines 16).

Claim Rejections – 35 USC 103

10. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

11. Claims 3 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gruen in view of Ito el al, U.S. Patent 6,564,244 (hereinafter Ito).

12. As per claim 3, Gruen taught the invention as claimed in claim 2 above. Gruen further taught wherein said virtual space table associates and stores said virtual space identifiers,

keywords and keyword categories at which said keywords were sent into said virtual spaces (col. 3, lines 6-11; col. 6, lines 50-67; col. 7, lines 47-50);

13. Gruen did not teach the step of said control means and the step of said decision means include said keyword message times. Ito taught the communication support system wherein

said control means additionally acquires said message times of said messages including keywords from said chat system and writes said keyword message times to said virtual space table (col. 3, lines 7-8); and

said decision means calculates said virtual space characteristics based on said keyword categories in accordance with chat volume in said virtual space from a message time until a specified time has elapsed (col. 3, lines 47-55).

14. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teachings of Gruen and Ito because Ito's system of including said keyword message times would increase the alertness of the user in Gruen's system by providing the recording means for users to track when a keyword message search is satisfied (col. 3, lines 9-24).

15. As per claim 11, Gruen taught the invention as claimed in claim 2 above. Gruen did not teach deleting said keyword and said keyword categories from said virtual space table. Ito taught wherein said control means additionally acquires a message time of a message that includes at least one of said keyword from said chat system, and additionally writes said message time to

said virtual space table, and deletes said keywords and keyword categories form said virtual space table wherein a specified time has elapsed since said message time (col. 10, lines 61-65).

16. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teachings of Gruen and Ito because Ito's system of deleting said keywords and keyword categories form said virtual space table would increase the efficiency in Gruen's system by providing a reduction of resources by configuring the communication support system so that the state of the channel is recorded for a fix period of time (col. 2, lines 47-52, 59-60).

17. Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gruen in view of Trovato el al, U.S. Patent 6,425,012 (hereinafter Trovato).

18. As per claim 5, Gruen taught the invention substantially as claimed in claim 2 above. Gruen did not teach the communication support system is additionally provided with a channel entry time storage means. Trovato taught wherein said communication support system is additionally provided with a channel entry time storage means for storing said entry time a chat device entered a virtual space for each virtual space (col. 3, lines 11-38; col. 4, lines 13-17); and

said decision means calculates said virtual space characteristics based on said keyword categories sent by chat devices in accordance with said entry times said chat devices remain in said virtual spaces (col. 3, lines 11-38; col. 4, lines 13-17).

19. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teachings of Gruen and Trovato because Trovato's system of including channel entry time would increase the likelihood of determining the characteristic of said virtual space in Gruen's system by using the entry time as a parameter to determine the specific topic of said virtual space (col. 2, lines 1-7, 19-22).

20. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gruen in view of Brown el al, U.S. Patent 5,941,947 (hereinafter Brown).

21. As per claim 6, Gruen taught the invention substantially as claimed in claim 2 above. Gruen did not teach acquiring the specific right of the chat device. Brown taught wherein said decision means acquires specific rights that a chat device has in regard to a virtual space form the chat system (col. 2, lines 32-36; col. 3, lines 26-30; col. 2, lines 66-col. 3, lines 11).

22. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teachings of Gruen and Brown because Brown's system of acquiring the rights of a chat device in regard to a virtual space would increase the flexibility of Gruen's system by controlling the rights of chat device in order to achieve a variety of objectives (col. 4, lines 66-col. 5, lines 2).

23. Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gruen in view of Bradshaw et al, U.S. Patent 6,065,056 (hereinafter Bradshaw).

24. As per claim 7, Gruen taught the invention substantially as claimed in claim 2 above. Gruen did not teach said decision means of comparing said virtual spaces characteristics and a keyword category. Bradshaw taught wherein said decision means compares said virtual spaces characteristics and a keyword category and decides whether or not to report a message to other chat devices wherein said message including a keyword is sent from a chat device into a virtual space (col. 3, lines 66-col. 4, lines 4; col. 4, lines 28-32; col. 6, lines 7-9; col. 11, lines 34-36); and

> said chat system sends the message in accordance with said decision (col. 3, lines 66-col. 4, lines 4; col. 4, lines 28-32; col. 6, lines 7-9; col. 11, lines 34-36).

25. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teachings of Gruen and Bradshaw because Bradshaw's means of reporting a message by comparing the virtual space characteristics and a keyword category would enhanced Gruen's system by providing notification over the content of the virtual space by the keyword category in a textual application (col. 2, lines 47-49).

26. Claims 8-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gruen and Bradshaw in view of Cottrille et al, U.S. Patent 6,076,100 (hereinafter Cottrille).

27. As per claims 8 and 10, Gruen and Bradshaw taught the invention substantially as claimed in claim 7 above. Gruen and Bradshaw did not teach means to expel a chat device.

Cottrille taught wherein decision means instructs the chat system to expel a chat device that sent an unsuitable message from a virtual space upon deciding that said message will not be reported to other chat devices (col. 5, lines 37-47; col. 7, lines 27-40); and

said chat system expels said chat device that sent said message form said virtual space in accordance with said instruction (col. 5, lines 37-47; col. 7, lines 27-40).

28. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teachings of Gruen, Bradshaw and Cottrille because Cottrille's system of expelling the chat device would improved the security in Gruen's and Bradshaw's system by monitoring the topic of the conversation and by providing the ability to apply penalties to improper user of chat device (col.1, lines 14-25).

29. As per claim 9, Cottrille further taught wherein said decision means additionally has a blacklist that records chat devices that sent unsuitable messages wherein said decision means decided that said messages would not be reported to other chat devices (col. 7, lines 11-26),

said decision means decides that said messages will not be reported to other chat devices wherein the sending sources of said message acquired from the chat system are included on said blacklist (col. 7, lines 11-26).

CONCLUSION

30. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Auvenshine, U.S. Patent 6,633,855 disclosed a method of blocking unacceptable chat content.

Humes, U.S. Patent 5,996,011 disclosed a system for filtering message received.

31. A shortened statutory period for reply to this Office action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action.

32. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Philip C Lee whose telephone number is (703)305-7721. The examiner can normally be reached on 8 AM TO 5:30 PM Monday to Thursday and every other Friday.

33. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Meng Ai An can be reached on (703)305-9678. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703)746-7239.

34. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703)350-6121.

P.L.

JOHN FOLLANSBEE
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